

Message Text

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FOL REPEAT ANKARA 3455 SENT ACTION SECSTATE
INFO GENEVA ADANA ISTANBUL IZMIR MAY 07

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 3455

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, SNAR, TU
SUBJ: CONVERSATION WITH PRIME MINISTER--OPIUM POPPY BAN

BEGIN SUMMARY AND COMMENT: IN MAY 6 MEETING WITH PRIME
MINISTER, I DELIVERED PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE OF CONCERN OVER
POSSIBLE TURKISH RECISION OF POPPY BAN. I STRONGLY REITERATED
USG POSITION THAT BINDING AGREEMENT EXISTS BETWEEN OUR TWO
GOVERNMENTS WHICH WOULD BE VIOLATED BY RECISION OF BAN. I AGAIN
ARGUED THAT RECISION WOULD BE ONLY MINOR HELP TO LEGITIMATE
GROWERS BUT MAJOR BONANZA TO CROOKS, THAT A RECISION WOULD
SERIOUSLY UNDERMINE PROGRESS MADE IN USG DRUG CONTROL EFFORTS,
AND THAT IT UNTHINKABLE THAT TURKEY WOULD GO BACK INTO POPPY PRO-
DUCTION WHEN RESULTING CONGRESSIONAL REACTION COULD HAVE SUCH
DISASTROUS CONSEQUENCES ON US-TURKISH RELATIONS.
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PRIME MINISTER EMPHASIZED THAT GOT SHARED PRESIDENT'S
CONCERN AND THIS WHY DECISION PROCEED WITH BAN RECISION HAD NOT
BEEN TAKEN UP UNTIL NOW. HE WENT ON TO ARGUE, HOWEVER, THAT IT
ESSENTIAL THAT SOME RECISION OF BAN BE EFFECTED, WHILE STRESSING

BELIEF THAT THIS TIME ADEQUATE SAFEGUARDS COULD BE INSTALLED, HOPEFULLY WITH SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE OF USG. HE ASSURED ME THAT BASIC GOT DECISION ON THIS MATTER WOULD NOT RPT NOT BE TAKEN BEFORE I RETURNED FROM WASHINGTON CONSULTATIONS AND BEFORE WE HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO MEET AGAIN.

IN ESSENCE, MEETING CONSISTED OF MUTUAL RESTATEMENTS OF TWO GOVERNMENTS' POSITIONS, WITH ECEVIT SAYING THAT DECISION TO REMOVE BAN HAD NOT YET BEEN TAKEN BECAUSE OF USG CONCERNS, BUT EVENTUALLY WOULD HAVE TO BE, AND WITH MY REEMPHASIZING THAT BAN RECISION OF ANY KIND UNACCEPTABLE TO USG AND CONSTITUTED A MAJOR THREAT TO USG-GOT RELATIONSHIPS.

IN FACE OF ECEVIT INTRANSIGENCE THERE WAS LITTLE IN MEETING WHICH GIVES ME MUCH ENCOURAGEMENT, OTHER THAN (A) ECEVIT OBVIOUSLY NOT YET PREPARED TO BITE THE BULLET, AND (B) WE APPEAR TO BE GAINING SOME ADDITIONAL TIME TO CONTINUE BRING PRESSURE OF USG VIEWS TO BEAR ON VARIOUS QUARTERS OF GOVERNMENT HERE. END SUMMARY AND COMMENT.

1. ONE AND A QUARTER HOUR MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER ECEVIT MAY 6 BEGAN WITH MY READING PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE (STATE 092323) VERBATIM. I THEN TOLD PRIME MINISTER IN FRANKEST TERMS OF MY GROWING CONCERN REGARDING POTENTIAL CONGRESSIONAL REACTION TO ANY TURKISH RECISION OF BAN. I SAID IT IMPORTANT FOR HIM TO UNDERSTAND THAT, TO BEST OF MY JUDGMENT, RECISION OF BAN HIGHLY LIKELY TO PRECIPITATE SERIOUS CRISIS IN US-TURKISH RELATIONS--AND I ADDED THAT AS DIPLOMAT, ID DID NOT USE WORD "CRISIS" LIGHTLY.

2. I ALSO DISCUSSED GOT'S REQUEST FOR TRANSFER OF FINAL \$5 MILLION FOR PAYMENTS TO FARMERS. DRAWING ON STATE 86717 AND TUPPER BROWN MEMORANDUM OF APRIL 23, I SPELLED OUT BASIS FOR US CONVICTION THAT BINDING USG-GOT AGREEMENT EXISTED AND WOULD BEE UNILATERALLY BREACHED IF TURKEY RESCINDS POPPY BAN. I HANDED PRIME MINISTER COPIES OF HANDLEY'S LETTER OF JULY 1971 AND ESENBEL'S 1971 AIDE MEMOIRE AND ASKED HIM TO REVIEW THESE CONFIDENTIAL

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HIMSELF. I THEN REPEATED OTHER BASIC ARGUMENTS AGAINST BAN RECISION, NAMELY THAT IT WOULD BRING MINOR BENEFITS TO LEGITIMATE FARMERS, A BONANZA TO TURKISH CROOKS, AND MAJOR SETBACK TO USG EFFORTS TO COMBAT HERION MENACE.

3. I ACKNOWLEDGED THAT LATTER TWO POINTS MIGHT NOT BE VALID IF EFFECTIVE ENFORCEMENT CONTROLS COULD BE ESTABLISHED, BUT I REITERATED CONVICTION OF US AND INTERNATIONAL EXPERTS THAT THIS NOT FULLY FEASIBLE UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES AND CERTAINLY NET EVEN PARTIALLY FEASIBLE IN THE TIME PERIOD GOT APPARENTLY CONTEMPLATING. I URGED PRIME MINISTER TO CONSULT WITH HIS OWN SENIOR POLICE EXPERTS WHO, I SAID, WOULD CONFIRM POINT I HAD JUST MADE. I SUGGESTED THAT IT WOULD BE EVEN MORE USEFUL FROM HIS POINT OF VIEW TO MEET PRIVATELY WITH DEA ADMINISTRATOR BARTELS, WHOSE

SERIOUS CONCERN OVER PROSPECTS OF BAN RECISION HAD BROUGHT HIM CURRENTLY TO ANKARA FOR CONSULTATIONS WITH ME AND OTHER EMBASSY OFFICIALS.

4. I NOTED THAT TURKEY HAD ORIGINALLY BEEN PRODUCER OF OPIUM GUM ONLY, BUT IN LATE 1950'S AND 60'S IT HAD ADDED MORPHINE BASE TO ITS REPERTOIRE. REFERRING TO RECENT DISCOVERY OF HEROIN LAB IN USAK PROVINCE AND TO POLICE BELIEF THAT A NUMBER OF OTHER SUCH LABS NOW EXIST WITHIN THE COUNTRY, I MADE POINT THAT TURKEY NOW MOVING TO THIRD PHASE AND BECOMING HEROIN PRODUCER ITSELF. I SAID THAT IF THESE LABS COULD EXIST HERE AT TIME WHEN OPIUM GROWING SUSPENDED, IT NOT HARD TO IMAGINE EXPANSION THIS ACTIVITY WOULD UNDERGO IF POPPIES BECAME READILY AVAILABLE AGAIN.

5. I AGAIN URGED THAT GOT PURSUE WORLD BANK ALTERNATIVE AND REFERRED TO AIDE MEMOIRE I HAD LEFT WITH FOREIGN MINISTER ON THIS SUBJECT. I REEMPHASIZED USG CONVICTION THAT THIS REPRESENTED FAR PREFERABLE SOLUTION TO PLIGHT OF POPPY FARMER WHILE AVOIDING GRAVE RISKS THAT RECISION PRESENTED TO OUR RELATIONSHIP.

6. IN RESPONSE, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT HE UNDERSTOOD THE PRESIDENT'S CONCERN, THAT HIS OWN CONCERN AND THAT OF THE WHOLE TURKISH PEOPLE ABOUT THE PREVIOUS MISUSE OF OPIUM IS NOT LESS THAN THAT OF THE PRESIDENT. (HE ADDED THAT IF TURKEY WAS NOT SO CONCERNED IT WOULD NOT INCUR SO MANY COMPLAINTS REGARDING THE HARSHNESS OF ITS SENTENCES TO FOREIGN DRUG USERS AND TRAFFICKERS.) HE THEN REPEATED THE VIEW THAT TURKEY HAD NOT BEEN CONFIDENTIAL

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GIVEN FAIR COMPENSATION AT TIME BAN IMPOSED, BUT WHEN I DIS-PUTED THIS HE SAID, "THIS IS NOT THE IMPORTANT THING FOR US."

7. HE SAID THE MAIN THING IS THAT WHILE TURKS, AS I WELL KNEW, HARDLY AGREED ON ANYTHING, ALL THE TURKISH POLITICAL PARTIES SUPPORTED A RECISION OF THE BAN. HE NEXT SAID THAT IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO MAKE A "SOPHISTICATED DISTINCTION" TO TURKISH PEOPLE BETWEEN HARD AND SOFT DRUGS--THEY ALL DID "HARM TO HUMAN MIND AND SOUL" AND WERE THEREFORE EQUALLY BAD IN TURKISH EYES. IT SEEMS TO TURKS THAT END RESULT OF CURRENT BAN WAS THAT MANUFACTURERS OF OTHER DRUGS WERE BENEFITTING FROM OPPORTUNITY TO FILL VACUUM.

8. HE THEN TURNED TO THE QUESTION OF CONTROL, AGREEING WITH MY STATEMENT THAT EFFECTIVE CONTROL CANNOT BE ESTABLISHED IN A SHORT TIME. HE ASSERTED, HOWEVER, THAT TURKEY HAS ALLOWED TIME. IT IS TURKEY'S RIGHT, HE SAID, TO GROW ANY CROP IT WANTS, BUT TURKEY HAS ASSURED EVERYONE THAT IT WILL CONTROL OPIUM. THERE IS A POSSIBILITY FOR MISUSE IF THE OPIUM REACHES THE SMUGGLERS, AND SO THE GOVT HAS CONCENTRATED ON HOW TO ESTABLISH AN EFFECTIVE CONTROL SYSTEM IN THE FIELDS. THE POINT, HE SAID, IS TO ESTABLISH A SYSTEM WHICH WILL BENEFIT THE FARMERS MORE THAN IN THE PAST. THE FARMERS WILL TURN THEIR PRODUCTION OVER TO THE GOVERNMENT IF A DRUG INDUSTRY IS ESTABLISHED IN THE AREA AND

SATISFACTORY PRICES ARE PAID. THE INCISION PROCESS, HE ASSERTED, CAN BE DONE ONLY IN A 10-12 DAY PERIOD AND THEN ONLY DURING DAY-LIGHT HOURS. IF CULTIVATION IS LIMITED STRICTLY TO AREAS NEAR TOWNS, THE CONTROL CAN BE EFFECTIVE. "WE WILL GIVE ANY ASSURANCE AND ACCEPT ANY SUGGESTION FROM ANY SOURCE," HE SAID.

9. WHEREVER OPIUM IS GROWN IN THE WORLD IT MUST BE CONTROLLED, HE SAID. TURKEY IS PREPARED TO BE AN AREA OF EXPERIMENTATION IN CONTROL METHODS BY THE WORLD BANK, THE UN OR THE US, AND IT IS DETERMINED TO ESTABLISH THE "MOST EFFECTIVE CONTROL SYSTEM THAT CAN BE IMAGINED" WHETHER OR NOT EXTERNAL ASSISTANCE IS PROVIDED. HOWEVER, HE CANNOT EXPLAIN TO THE TURKISH PEOPLE THAT OPIUM GROWING MAY BE ALLOWED ELSEWHERE BUT NOT IN TURKEY. HE SAID THE GOVT HAD HOPED AND STILL HOPES A US OFFER WILL COME TO HELP ON CONTROL MEASURES.

10. HE REPEATED THAT HE UNDERSTOOD THE SENSITIVITY OF THE PRESIDENT AND THE AMERICAN PEOPLE TO THIS PROBLEM, BUT HE
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EMPHASIZED THAT WE MUST UNDERSTAND THE TURKISH CONCERNS. TURKEY FEELS THAT THE AMERICAN MUST ACCEPT SOME TURKISH POPPY GROWING PROVIDED THE CONTROLS ARE EFFECTIVE. "WE WILL DO ANYTHING YOU WANT TO GIVE YOU THE ASSURANCES YOU NEED," HE SAID. I RESPONDED WRONGLY THAT THIS MIGHT MEAN GROWING ON A SINGLE PLOT "THE SIZE OF THIS OFFICE BUILDING, AND EVEN THAT SURROUNDED BY AN ARMY." "WE ARE PREPARED TO DO THAT," HE REPLIED.

11. ECEVIT THEN REPEATED TO ME WHAT HE AND FOREIGN MINISTER GUNES HAVE BEEN LATELY SAYING IN THE PRESS, NAMELY THAT NO GOVERNMENT WOULD EVER LIMIT ITS SOVEREIGN RIGHT OF DECISION IN A MATTER SUCH AS GROWING POPPIES THROUGH AN AGREEMENT WITH ANOTHER GOVERNMENT. I EXPRESSED SURPRISE AT THIS COMMENT, NOTING THAT GOVERNMENTS OFTEN, AND QUITE NORMALLY, AGREE TO LIMIT THE EXERCISE OF THEIR SOVEREIGN AUTHORITY THROUGH AGREEMENTS WITH ONE ANOTHER.

12. LATER IN CONVERSATION ECEVIT APPEARED TO ACKNOWLEDGE FOR THE FIRST TIME THAT AN AGREEMENT ON POPPY MATTER, TO SOME EXTENT, EXISTED. HE ATTEMPTED TO ARGUE, HOWEVER, THAT AGREEMENT INVOLVED MONIES TO BE PAID (WHICH WE OF COURSE WERE FREE TO STOP ONCE A BAN DECISION WAS TAKEN) BUT THAT TURKISH DECISION TO BAN WAS UNILATERAL--AND THUS COULD BE RESCINDED UNILATERALLY. IN RESPONSE I AGAIN EMPHASIZED THAT WHILE PUBLIC RECORD WAS DELIBERATELY MADE TO LOOK AS THOUGH BAN WAS UNILATERAL ACTION, NEGOTIATING RECORD, HANDLEY LETTER AND ESENBEL DOCUMENT CLEARLY ESTABLISHED BAN AND PAYMENT WERE COMBINED IN BINDING TURKISH-US AGREEMENT. I ENDED THIS PORTION OF OUR CONVERSATION BY (A) STRESSING THAT PAYMENTS WERE FOR "TRANSITION," NOT SIMPLY A YEARLY STIPEND FOR EACH YEAR THE BAN EXISTED, AND (B) THAT THE BREACH OF AN AGREEMENT IS A SIGNIFICANT MATTER INDEED IN THE RELATIONS BETWEEN STATES.

13. I EXPRESSED MY DISCOURAGEMENT WITH THE LINE HIS RESPONSE

HAD TAKEN, AS IT INDICATED TO ME THAT I HAD NOT GOTTEN ACROSS TO
HIM ADEQUATELY THE SERIOUS DESCENDING SPIRAL IN US-TURKISH
RELATIONS WHICH I BELIE

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